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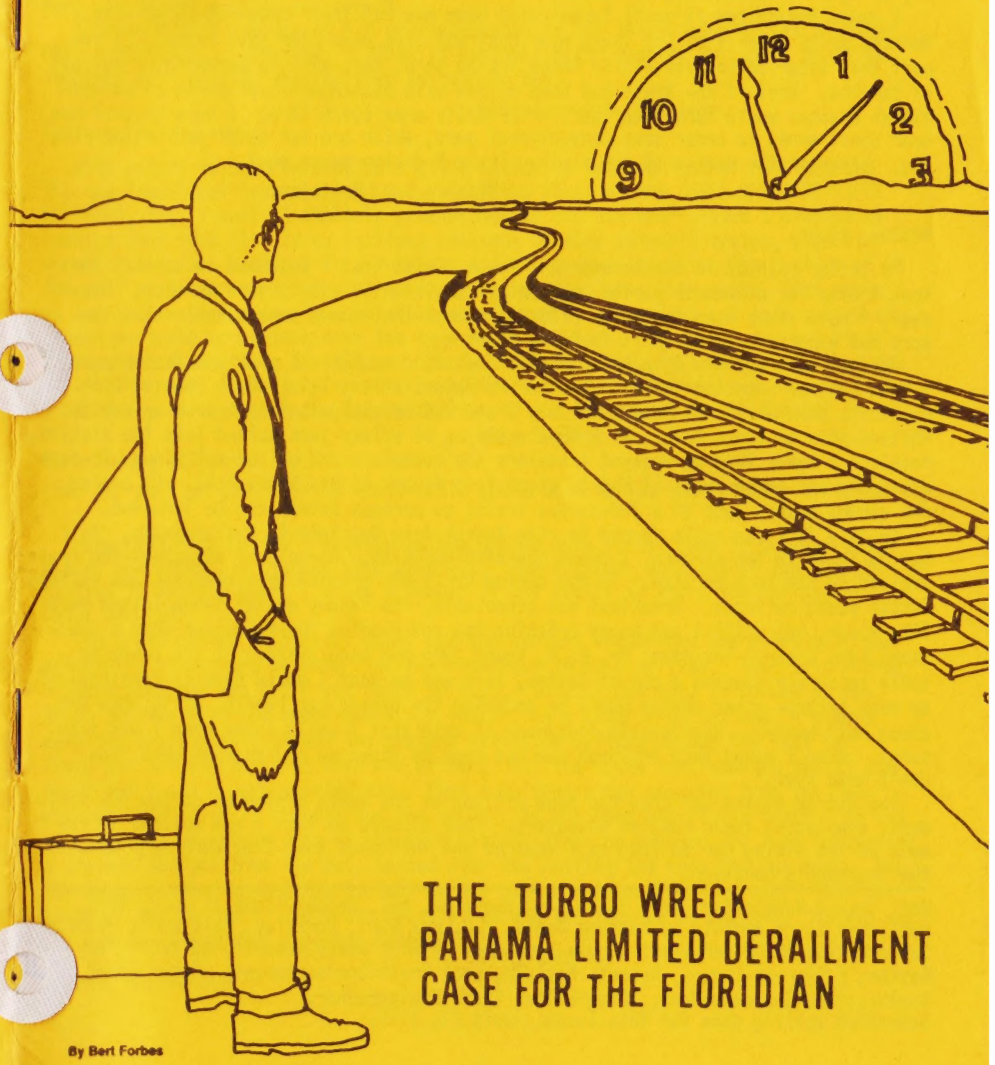


By Bert Forbes

THE TURBO WRECK
PANAMA LIMITED DERAILMENT
CASE FOR THE FLORIDIAN

ON THE COVER: Anthony Haswell, Chairman of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, is shown in this drawing by Bert Forbes from the Christian Science Monitor (July 2) gazing at a symbolic landscape which points up some of the problems of contemporary rail travel which NARP is battling. NARP, the most important consumer organization representing the rail passenger, is in the thick of the fight over needed Amtrak budget increases, improved service, and the retention of trains that are scheduled for discontinuance. Read in this issue about the case brought against the discontinuance of Amtrak's Chicago-Florida FLORIDIAN.
(Drawing by Bert Forbes in Christian Science Monitor, ©1973 T.C.S.P.S.)

LETTERS

I have received your last two extremely discouraging issues. The only good or pleasant thing in them was the April-May ridership data for Amtrak (1st July issue). Please do keep up this reporting--it is invaluable for measuring just what is going on, as well as fascinating to study.

I guess the United Aircraft TurboTrains have now had their crowning curse--the burning up so quickly of the train near Montreal (see news item this issue). I expect that after seeing how easily these trains burn, they will be permanently put out of service. What if the train had been filled with passengers? No train of conventional coaches would burn like that, or probably even catch fire. I hope we will now hear about moves to order some conventional cars, which are far safer and better riding. Remember the demise of the similar Train X design years ago?

Richard Day, Professor
University of Idaho
Moscow, Idaho

My letter printed in the Second June issue stated that I intended to boycott Amtrak trains for a 6-month period because of consistently substandard service. However, I have since been forced to ride two Amtrak trains and consequently have two more bad experiences to report to RTN's readers.

Because of a variety of complications, including mechanical problems that plagued a Penn Central commuter train in New York's Penn Station, I failed to connect with the Reading's WALL STREET at Newark on July 6 and had no choice but to Amtrak my way to Philadelphia on train #225. At 6:16pm a string of silver junk pulled into the station, received a heavy load of weekend travelers and commuters and pulled out minus air-conditioning and ample seats (I had to stand from Newark to New Brunswick). Of course, one cannot expect much of a 200-series train, so perhaps Amtrak can be forgiven.

On July 18 I was again forced to ride Amtrak from New York to Philadelphia. As I had to leave in the morning, I chose the WASHINGTONIAN. Miracle of miracles--the train arrived in New York on time. In the dining car I was greeted by a cheerful and enthusiastic young waitress. Breakfast was acceptable, the "snowy white" linen looked more like slush, but still I was happy drinking tea and reading the newspaper when a sour-faced Penn Central trainman, Mr. K. W. Young, who had been sitting at the opposite table leisurely sipping a cup of coffee, informed me that I would have to "relinquish" my seat because other people would be entering the dining car (which, at 10:30am was about half empty). Righteously indignant, I said that I would leave when I was finished. When I asked this trainman for his name he glowered and snapped back "you don't need that."

The Amtrak dining car crew had been sitting at the table behind me during the incident, completing their routine inventory. They assured me that I was welcome to remain in the dining car as long as I desired and indicated that they were also upset by the trainman's behavior.

Rail Travel Newsletter, Vol. 3, No. 14 (Whole No. 64), Second Issue of July, 1973. Published twice monthly by Message Media, P.O. Box 9007, Berkeley, California 94709. Subscription $6.00 per year; single copy 25¢. STAFF: James Russell, Editor; Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large; Kenneth Maylath, East Coast Correspondent; Peter Roehm, Northeastern Correspondent; Doug Ellis, Staff Photographer.
Scheduled mailing date for this issue: July 27, 1973.

In response to Mr. Westerfield's comment in the last RTN that complaints ought to be addressed directly to Amtrak, I would like to state that I have been doing this ever since the Corporation was founded. In the aforementioned case, I reported trainman Young's uncalled-for behavior to the WASHINGTONIAN's Amtrak supervisor, to the Conductor, to an executive of Penn Central's Passenger Services Dept. in Philadelphia, and to my Congressman. I am in the process of writing a formal complaint to Amtrak headquarters in Washington.

While my actions may appear extreme, I believe that they are warranted. Such discourteous treatment of passengers is characteristic of many Penn Central employees. Unless corrective action is taken when such incidents occur, these employees will continue to discourage passengers from traveling by train in the future. If I were to receive such uncivil treatment on one of the nation's major air carriers, I know that a complaint would prompt immediate and thorough investigation of the matter. Is Amtrak equally concerned?

I believe that readers of RTN are interested in the travel experiences of other rail supporters. Therefore, I think it worthwhile for readers to report their encounters with Amtrak, whether they be good or bad.

Christopher H. Anderson
Newtown, Pennsylvania

With regard to John Harrington's differentiation between "smart" railfans who fly and "dumb" railfans who remain loyal to the likes of the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY (LETTERS, last issue), I can only remark that no one has ever solved a problem by running away from it. If we railfans continue to ride Amtrak's trains, even its worst trains, and continue to devote our efforts toward improving the quality of the rail passenger services offered to American travelers, then maybe, just maybe, we can influence the development of a modern, rapid, convenient and safe system of passenger train operations over the next 10 or 20 years. If we all cop out like Harrington, riding only the RGZ and the SOUTHERN CRESCENT until 1975, when they too will either meet their fate or come under the auspices of Amtrak, all hope is lost. I am of the opinion that the former course and not the latter is the "smart" one.

Mike Blaszak
Park Ridge, Illinois

(For our part we consider the worst train preferable to the best highway vehicle. --Ed.)

Regarding Paul Rayton's article in the Second June issue: Here is another example of why Amtrak is plagued with problems. The incident occurred at the Amtrak station in Salinas where I drove a member of the family to catch the northbound COAST DAYLIGHT.

The train pulled in late as usual but the porters encouraged the detraining and entraining passengers to move lively--presumably to make up time. Vestibule doors slammed shut and the train was ready to move. Only it did not. I looked up the track and saw that the green board was indicating a clear right of way. A glance down the track merely showed the flagman patiently waiting beyond the last car. There was nothing amiss at this end either. Yet the train continued to sit at the depot and I was a very puzzled man. Then I noticed a man emerging from the "employees only" door to the station and walking to the head end of the train. He was carrying two styrofoam cups of steaming coffee. When he reached the lead locomotive, a crewman emerged from the cab, leaned over the railing and took the two cups. The first man climbed aboard the locomotive and both men re-entered the cab. With two toots of the air horn, the train finally resumed its journey to Oakland. Do you see why Amtrak is fighting a losing battle?

Elmer Lagorio
Carmel, California

One of your readers chides disgruntled Amtrak patrons for failing to send their complaints to Amtrak itself. I sent a more detailed version of my letter printed in RTN (Second June issue) to Amtrak on June 13, together with a request for refund of the difference between Turbo and ordinary fares from Boston to New York. As of July 19 there has been neither refund nor acknowledgment. The better advice is that offered by Mr. Lee (LETTERS, last issue): tell your political representatives about your experience with Amtrak.

Fred H. Matthews

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

What airline or bus company payroll is Mr. Paul Rayton on? (RTN, Second June issue) His pessimistic reports would prevent anyone from riding the trains again.

Last October my sons (ages 10 & 11) and I had a wonderful rail trip. We rode the COAST STARLIGHT L.A.-Seattle, the EMPIRE BUILDER to Chicago, and the SUPER CHIEF returning to L.A. Our accommodations were bedroom suites. On all three trains the rooms were immaculate, the air conditioning perfect, and the service excellent!

On the EMPIRE BUILDER our car "Silver Prairie" was in charge of Mr. Ray Garcia. For years Mr. Garcia worked in the observation lounges of the CZ. He retired last January. Words or money cannot express the feeling I have for Ray Garcia's courtesy and service. My sons received Christmas cards from him, and they still correspond with him.

On our trip the trains were 100% on time, the food and service in the diners excellent, and the scenery in the Cascades and Rockies beyond description!

We now have made reservations for another rail vacation this October. We will travel from L.A. to Vancouver, B.C. on the STARLIGHT and PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL; to Montreal on the CANADIAN; to Washington on the WASHINGTONIAN. From Washington it will be the BROADWAY LIMITED to Chicago, then the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR to Oakland. We plan to spend the day with Ray Garcia in Chicago.

Our Amtrak trains are fine--my family is eagerly looking forward to our trip in October.

E. G. Loughridge

Long Beach, California

(Our prediction is that you'll have another wonderful time on your October trip. The off-season, particularly autumn, is an excellent rail traveling time, as noted in George Hyko's 2-part article on his extensive trip last November--RTN Vol. 2, Nos. 20 & 21. Only the best equipment is on the rails in relatively slack seasons, and lack of crowding means easier reservations and less headaches all around. This is particularly true if you stick to Amtrak "premier" or "priority" trains such as the SUPER CHIEF, COAST STARLIGHT, and BROADWAY LIMITED. Equipment failures and problems due to crowding and reservations snafus are always more prevalent in the hot, busy summer season when all equipment, good and bad, is pressed into service. And here we confront a dilemma: Amtrak has designated its premier trains as those to get the glamor treatment while others with lower ridership or for other reasons must make do with less elegant treatment, so that gradually riders learn which trains are the nicest and tend to avoid the others. Thus Amtrak's decision that certain routes have higher priority becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, as ridership fails to increase spectacularly on the others. Should we advise riders to take the NATIONAL LTD, the GEORGE WASHINGTON, the FLORIDIAN and the Detroit-Chicago trains? If we do they'll find substandard service, and if we don't these trains may suffer further. The ultimate solution is that Amtrak should have enough money to upgrade all its trains equally and have the good faith to try to preserve these routes until it is able really to work on them properly.--Ed.)

On June 14 we got up early to catch the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY from Cincinnati to Chicago. The train picked us up two hours late, but we weren't worried since we didn't have to make our connection in Chicago until 5pm, and our train was scheduled to arrive there around 4:15. When we were pulling into the train yards about 3 miles

from the Chicago station, our train stopped. We went outside to see what was happening, and the conductor said the train had run out of fuel! He said there was nothing he could do to help us make our connection, but he was very sorry, and commented "How would an airplane pilot explain something like this?" My wife noticed a man in a car on the gravel road next to the track and asked him if he could either take us to the station, or contact someone who could. He said that he worked for Illinois Central, not Amtrak, and that he was really too busy. Then we watched him chat with the crew for about half an hour.

I noticed a highway not far from where the train had stopped so I walked over to stop a cab. I had no luck, and before long it didn't matter--it was after 5:00. Finally another engine came to tow us in and we arrived at the station around 6:30. This made us 4½ hours late.

Since we had to spend the night in Chicago, the Amtrak staff made arrangements for us at a local hotel, and paid for our meals. They were very sympathetic and gracious, but who will give us back a day of our vacation?

Our trip on the TEXAS CHIEF the next day was comfortable and all that we expect rail travel to be. We got off the train at Houston and drove to Corpus Christi. On June 24 we were scheduled to leave Houston at 10:15 to take the SUNSET LIMITED to New Orleans. We left Corpus Christi at 6am and arrived at the station around a half hour before the train was to arrive. Then we waited. The train pulled in at 2:45pm and we were six hours late getting into New Orleans.

After two nights there, we boarded the PANAMA LIMITED for Chicago. Our bedroom was in a dome car, and we were very impressed with the attractive way it had been refurbished. However, before we left the station the power went out in the car for a few minutes, and I commented to the conductor that our room seemed unusually warm. He assured me that the car was in perfect operating condition. But by 8pm it was clear that the air conditioning was not working at all, and shortly after all the power went out. Arrangements were made for a repair crew to meet us at Memphis at 11:30 that night. Meanwhile we sat in the closed dining car.

The repair crew found that all the battery cells were dry, so they were filled, and we left Memphis hoping that the power would come back on. It was soon clear that the problem was not fixed, and the conductor said that the next repairs could not be attempted until 4am in Carbondale. We found some seats in the coach, and I slept on the floor with the dog until a porter said I couldn't sleep there. Around 6am we found an empty drew compartment and slept in a bed without linen. We rested there until we arrived in Chicago. Our first class fare was refunded by Amtrak at Chicago. The trip to Cincinnati was uneventful.

The purpose of this letter is to give you some idea of how inconvenient, unpleasant, and frustrating much of our trip was because of poor service... I still believe that <u>good</u> rail travel can be relaxing and enjoyable, and I hope that Amtrak can develop an efficiently operating system for this country. Refurbishing the cars is not enough.

Robert Schantz

Cincinnati, Ohio

During 1972 I traveled over 21,000 miles by train; approximately 2,000 miles over Southern Railway and Canadian National, the rest by Amtrak. With the exception of some equipment failures, I had several enjoyable trips. I rode the SUNSET, METRO-LINER, BROADWAY LIMITED, EMPIRE BUILDER, SUPER CHIEF, PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL, and 3 trips on the COAST STARLIGHT. I discussed Amtrak's future with several hundred passengers and at times some became irate due to the breakdown in equipment and other services. Some threatened to fly or drive their cars the next time, but I always defended Amtrak and advised them that things will be better as time goes on.

On June 10 I departed Los Angeles on the SUNSET LIMITED destined to New Orleans. The following morning I went into the diner for breakfast and the air conditioning was not working. It was extremely hot, the passengers were concerned about lunch, and at 1:10pm I went into the dining car and asked the steward why lunch was not being served, with the understanding that the heat was almost intolerable. However,

(continued on page 18)

HOUSE WORKING ON $107 MILLION BUDGET FOR AMTRAK

While the Senate has tentatively approved a $185 million appropriation for Amtrak for the present fiscal year, the House Commerce Committee was reported considering a $107.3 million bill for the rail corporation. The committee, meeting July 18 and scheduled to reconvene this week, voted to allow Auto-Train to compete with Amtrak by initiating the Midwest-Florida route, which would be in competition with Amtrak's FLORIDIAN, a train the corporation is seeking to discontinue. Sen. Eagleton of Missouri, meanwhile, told a Senate subcommittee that Amtrak President Roger Lewis has said that Amtrak would be happy to continue running the FLORIDIAN and the NATIONAL LIMITED if Congress would appropriate $107 million and the funds are not impounded by President Nixon.

In related news, the House July 25 passed a bill which restricts the President's ability to impound funds voted by Congress, while setting a ceiling on spending for the fiscal year. The Administration continues to impound funds earlier earmarked for a new Amtrak service to Laredo, Texas, via Little Rock, Arkansas and for restoration of passenger service in the San Joaquin Valley of California.

AMTRAK TRAINS ORDERED TO CONTINUE RUNNING

The Interstate Commerce Commission July 22 ordered Amtrak to keep running the FLORIDIAN and the NATIONAL LIMITED until at least Dec. 2 while it holds public hearings on the requested discontinuances. The ICC also rejected Amtrak's request to drop trains 98 and 99, the Richmond-Newport News extensions of the GEORGE WASHINGTON/JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, on the grounds that Amtrak request was improperly filed.

NEW COMPROMISE ON USE OF HIGHWAY TRUST FUNDS FOR TRANSIT

After two months of bickering, House-Senate negotiators July 20 agreed to allow some Highway Trust Fund money to be used for urban mass transit. The $19-billion bill in question covers Federal aid to highways for a 3-year period, and it keeps the trust fund unbroken for one more year; starting July 1, 1974, $200 million could be spent on buses, while in fiscal year 1976 cities could use $800 million either for highway use or for bus and rail transit. The Highway Action Coalition expressed disappointment at the meager amount given to mass transit, but acknowledged that "it's a foot in the door," according to the N.Y. Times. It is expected that both houses of Congress will pass the compromise measure and that it will be signed by President Nixon.

A related development has the Senate Banking Committee (July 25) approving a bill to permit operating subsidies to go to state and local transit agencies in the amount of $800 million over the next two years. The Administration is opposed to this idea, and a veto of such a plan would be expected.

NORTHEAST RAILROAD BILL LIKELY TO BE VETOED

Senator Vance Hartke's plan for rejuvenating the Northeast railroads faces a veto by the Administration, DOT spokesmen have made clear in recent speeches. A Northeast Railroad Corporation, proposed by Hartke, would be too big and too unlikely to be profitable, according to Administration spokesmen. The Nixon Administration basically wants a minimum of Federal funds to go into whatever crawls out of the Northeast rail chaos.

CANADIAN RAILROAD WALKOUT EXPECTED

"Selective strikes" against Canadian railroads were expected to begin July 26, according to the Association of Non-Operating Railway Employes. A 2-day strike against all roads in Ontario would be first on the agenda, affecting Canadian National, Canadian Pacific, and smaller railroads in the province.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Why do we do this? Look at it this way. We're a public service corporation. It is pretty important to have good community relations and good public relations. This is a part of it. And besides, I like trains. Any kind of trains. Freight trains. Passenger trains. The Southern, unlike much of the railroad industry of which it is an important part, is run by men who love railroads."

--Southern Railway President W. Graham Claytor in Washington Post July 15, replying to question about why Southern runs excursion trains

"We're beginning to give the airlines and buslines a real run for the money, all over the Amtrak system. I rode in from Los Angeles the other day and I counted some 400 passengers aboard. The airliner I flew out to the coast on was only half filled. Amtrak's future looks real good."

--Dr. M. D. Monaghan in Dallas Times Herald, July 16

"(Freeways) never were 'free.' Aside from the cost of construction and operation, which is paid for with taxes, the highways have generated high social costs. Damage to the environment, noise, and disruption of communities have been ignored much too long."

--DOT Secretary Claude S. Brinegar in U.S. News & World Report, July 23

"There was a time during this period of hijacks that they started searching. There was a time I got in line and a fellow two or three persons in front of me had to produce four packs of cigarettes. I had $50,000 this time, so I got into a coughing fit and I went down to the Pennsylvania Railroad and took the train."

--Anthony Ulasewicz testifying before Senate Watergate committee about money drops, July 18

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"The Senate voted yesterday to authorize an $8 million study on how to make passenger trains run at 200 to 300 miles an hour between Vancouver, B.C., and Tijuana, Mexico, by the 1900's."

--San Francisco Chronicle, July 12

"Other programs being undertaken for the U.S. Department of Transportation, Bartlett said, are aimed at conventional steel rail trains capable of 250 mph by 2980 and an air cushion train capable of 300 mph speeds by 1990."

--San Francisco Daily Commercial News, June 6

(Doesn't anyone want some fast trains for the 1970's?)

Urban-Suburban Transit

NEW YORK GOVERNOR Rockefeller made public a proposal July 20 for a $3.5 billion bond issue to go before the state Legislature this month and to the voters next fall for financing highways and new mass transit operations and to subsidize in part New York City's subway and other mass transit facilities in order to preserve the 35¢ fare. Mass transit would have a 60% share of the budget, with the rest for highways...

THREE ENVIRONMENTAL AND transit rider organizations filed a suit July 16 in New York to require the state to stabilize commuter fares to prevent more cars from being forced onto the roads. The groups are the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Institute for Public Transportation, and Friends of the Earth. They seek to overturn New York's present plan for implementing the Federal "clean air act"...

BART CARS REMAIN idled by a strike in which little or no sign of progress is visible. Meanwhile San Francisco is irate that BART will be apparently unable to meet the proposed Sept. 24 date for beginning service to that city. The city plans to go ahead, nevertheless, with a celebration the weekend preceding that date, and the Mayors of several foreign cities have been invited to attend. The plan is for

BART to run a token train manually thru the trans-bay tube for the occasion. Urged on by Mayor Alioto of San Francisco, a plan has been suggested to BART for operating its trains in a loop fashion in order to get service to S.F. going without waiting for final testing and approval of the complex switching arrangement in downtown Oakland. Trains would run in a loop from Fremont thru Oakland to S.F., then back thru Oakland to Richmond, then straight out to Fremont again, where the loop would recommence. The Concord line would continue as before, as a shuttle between Concord and Oakland's MacArthur Station only. The plan would require much more transferring between trains than the original BART plan...

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S Urban Mass Transportation Administration this month announced several grants to support urban transit: $2.5 million to California's Metropolitan Transportation Commission headquartered in Berkeley for continuing regional transportation planning program and several specific planning projects; $13.1 million supplemental grant to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority for the acquisition of the Reading Line from the Boston & Maine railroad; $10.5 million to New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority to assist in continuing the rehabilitation and extension of the Long Island Rail Road electrification system; $69.5 million to the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority to help finance the first phase of Atlanta's $1.75 billion rail-busway system. UMTA also has published a report, "The Handicapped and Elderly Market for Urban Mass Transit--Executive Summary," available to the public from N.T.I.S., 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, VA 22151...

BOSTON'S MASSACHUSETTS BAY Transportation Authority is planning a 5-year, $1 billion improvement program, to include line extensions and acquisition of new cars...

STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION in Michigan has approved $3.9 million for the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority for expanded service. This includes the state's portion of subsidy of a new Port Huron-Chicago Amtrak train on the Grand Trunk Western route, a line discontinued when Amtrak took over. It also covers establishment of an 8-trains-each-way-daily commuter service between downtown Detroit and Ann Arbor along the Michigan Avenue corridor; help to at least 8 smaller cities to establish Dial-A-Ride Transportation service patterned after Ann Arbor's system; preliminary design of a "people-mover"; and study of bus and car pool lanes...

VIRGINIA'S GOVERNOR WILL receive the report of a study soon which will affirm that Richmond can be tied into the Northeast Corridor by laying new tracks to handle high-speed trains tying in with the Metroliners in Washington. Amtrak would be required the approve the plan, and the state General Assembly must agree to it...

CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE late in June narrowly passed a bill to create a new Southern California transportation district to develop a rapid transit system for L.A...

STATE OF ILLINOIS has promised more money to the Chicago Transit Authority to try to prevent service cutbacks threatened when the state legislature did not approve either a regional transit agency or continued subsidies...

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY Board made its final report on the collision last October of two ICG commuter trains in Chicago, and said the train that hit the backing train was doing double the 30-mph speed limit, and that ambiguous rules about flagging contributed to the crash, and that ICG did not enforce five of its own flagging rules...

ROHR INDUSTRIES, INC., has been given the go-ahead from the COT to start building a guideway for testing the "Aerotrain," a tracked air cushion vehicle, in Pueblo, Colorado. It will run up to 150mph...

NEW COMMUTER BOATS are to begin running in October between New York City and Keyport, NJ, operated by Hydro-Ski of New Jersey. One boat will begin operation, carrying 1500 daily, with a dozen craft to be running within two years on several routes connecting the two states.

FRENCH TURBO ARRIVAL

The untimely destruction of the $2 million dollar United Aircraft TurboTrain that Amtrak was to obtain from Canada (see news item p. 10) lends a note of uncertainty to Amtrak's plans for initiation of Turbo service on two Midwestern routes later in the year. A second Canadian Turbo was still being tested, but now Amtrak's decision on what will happen is up in the air, and probably an announcement will be delayed until the last moment. Two routes, Milwaukee-Chicago and St. Louis-Chicago, are in question. Most recent word, before the wreck, was that Turbo service was to begin anout October 1.

Meanwhile, somewhere out in the Atlantic as most readers read these lines, a vessel of American Container Lines named the "Atlantic Cognac" is plying the waves, bringing a draught of French variety to American rail lines. The ship is carrying two French Turbine-powered trains from Le Havre to our shores for movement to Chicago, where they will be tested and eventually put into revenue service.

The trains are being carried carefully mid-deck on rails aboard the ship. The trains remain on rails during the entire delivery operation, being loaded on ramps at Le Havre. The trains will arrive at Elizabeth, New Jersey on August 6. After being unloaded they will travel to Chicago under their own power over the route of the BROADWAY LIMITED, with the first train due to reach Chicago the evening of August 10 and the second due in on the 12th or 13th. Overnight stops will be made in Newark and Pittsburgh. Because most of Amtrak's available staff are presently involved in the French Turbo operation, there have been few available to resolve the problem of the United Aircraft Turbos. Earlier this month one of the Turbo trainsets between Boston and New York suffered a fire when a piece of metal on the track touched the third rail of the electrified line and created an electric arc which set off a fire in one of the power units. There were no personal injuries, but the train is still out of service because of severe damage to the power unit. This fact and the loss of one of the Canadian trains leaves Amtrak with Turbo equipment shortages, and a decision must be made whether to run the one remaining Canadian Turbo on one of the Chicago corridor routes. The best guess at this point is that the two French Turbos will probably go onto the Chicago-St. Louis route.

Amtrak has been preparing a $3 million servicing facility at Brighton Park near Chicago for handling the two types of Turbo trains and any kind of self-propelled cars such as RDC's. This is Amtrak's first fully-owned facility, and it will not be quite ready by the time the trains arrive. Test runs of the French trains will begin out of Chicago the week of August 13. Two days are required for the unloading process in New Jersey before they wend their way to Chicago.

The equipment loss rules out a comparison experiment which Amtrak wished to make--that of comparing the performance of the two types of trains on one route.

Amtrak removed the premium fare on the Boston-N.Y. Turbos July 1 because of the unreliable performance of the trains. The fare was cut from $15.65 to $9.90, the normal Boston-N.Y. conventional train fare. Amtrak has also decided to relocate its Northeast Corridor Turbo servicing facility in Boston rather than Providence, to eliminate wasted miles. Transmission problems reportedly account for the Turbo difficulties encountered on the East Coast, resulting in Amtrak's ability to use the trains for only about half of their scheduled runs.

100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CABLE CAR

The Centennial of San Francisco's cable cars will be celebrated beginning August 2 in that city. It was on that date in 1873 that Andrew Hallidie's original cable car began operation on the Clay Street line (now torn up). For the opening of the week-long festivities, the original car will be moved down Clay Street on a flatbed truck. A new cable car, designated no. 1, has been built by the S.F. Muni Railway, and modelled after the old Powell Street-type car. It's the first cable car to be built here since 1906, the year of the San Francisco earthquake. It makes its first run August 2, heading a parade from the cable car barn via Powell Street to the turntable at Beach Street.

canadian news letter

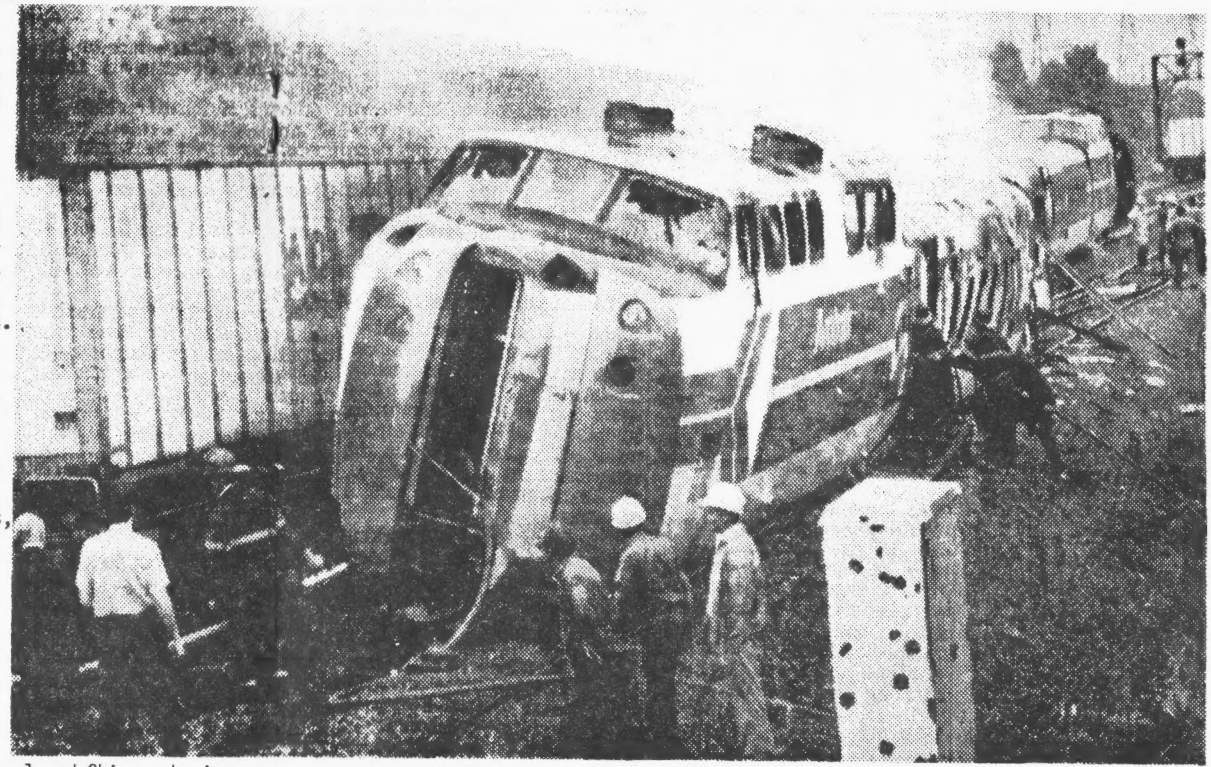
AMTRAK CANADIAN TURBO DESTROYED NEAR MONTREAL

Amtrak's plan to introduce TurboTrain service to two Midwestern routes suffered a severe blow July 20 when one of the two Turbo trainsets the rail corporation was to obtain from United Aircraft of Canada, surplus equipment of Canadian National, was completely destroyed in a wreck and fire at Lachine, 15 miles west of Montreal. The turbine-powered train sideswiped a freight and burst into spectacular flames, reducing it to a "pile of scrap," in the words of an Amtrak spokesman. Ten persons were reportedly injured in the mishap, none apparently seriously. The worst injury was to Mr. D. M. Boria, Amtrak's Manager of Equipment Engineering, who was burned when a coffee urn of hot liquid tipped over upon him.

The train, painted up with Amtrak logos (different from the trains now running between Boston and New York--see adjoining photo), was on a final test run from Montreal to Brockville, Ontario, when the wreck occurred. About 25 people were aboard the train, undergoing its final tests before acceptance by Amtrak and delivery a week later to Chicago to be placed in service. Most riders were officials of Amtrak, United Aircraft, and various railroads. Three of the 10 injured were Canadians.

The train appears from published photos to have been moving thru a switch when it struck a freight which had not cleared the switch. Four freight cars burnt, along with 3 of the 5 Turbo cars. The other two were said to be heavily damaged. Early accounts in the press termed the burning fuel "highly combustible"; however, TurboTrain fuel is the same diesel fuel used in conventional trains.

For the effect of this incident upon Amtrak Midwestern plans, see additional news item in this issue.



United Press International

THE DERAILMENT OF a Canadian National freight train near Ashcroft, B.C. July 14 caused the rerouting of CN trains over CP tracks for approximately 24 hours. The tracks were distorted by "sun kinks" in 100° heat, causing the wreck.

THE "INTERNATIONAL LIMITED," the name of a famous CN train of the past, will be given to the fixed train consist that will be headed by steam locomotive 6060 when it resumes service late this year or early in 1974. The excursion train's name honors the premier international train run by CN between Montreal and Chicago beginning in 1900. The former train covered the 335-mile run between Montreal & Toronto in 360 minutes including stops, making it the fastest train in the world for a run of that length. The locomotive will be used for steam excursion trips in Canada and in the U.S. on Grand Trunk Western and Central Vermont. It will also be joined with engine 6218 in an Oct. 27 double-header from Toronto to Fort Erie, where 6218 will go into permanent public display, having run excursions until retirement in 1971.

NO THROUGH SLEEPER service between Winnipeg and Prince Rupert was found by reader Harry Spilman of Glendale, California. On the Prince George to Prince Rupert (CN trains 9 & 10) run he reported a consist early this month of an F7 diesel unit, steam car, 2 baggage cars, coach, diner, and coach. All sleepers were added or dropped at Prince George.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION, for the first time in its short history, has granted the hearing request of a private citizens' group seeking additional rail passenger service. The group is Ontario's GO North committee, and it wants a daily commuter run between suburban Barrie and Toronto, some 60 miles south. CN has failed to initiate service on its own, though studies and experiments show the run will attract more riders than other Toronto area commuter runs. At present, GO buses on commute runs become hopelessly mired in highway traffic tangles. Reaction in Barrie has been mixed. While many support the new service, citing "saved" marriages as one positive benefit, Barrie Mayor Dorian Parker said that the new service would "destroy" Barrie by making it a Toronto bedroom city, driving out lower-income residents. He was thus opposed to the proposed runs. The Toronto Star has editorialized for use of a different northern route.

CN HAS ADDED two more round trips on the Toronto-London, Ontario main line, using rail diesel car equipment.

TORONTO'S EATON'S DEPARTMENT store chartered the entire Toronto transit system on June 28 for a 2-hour period to publicize a sale. The TTC reported traffic was up 64.7 per cent during the two-hour free-fare period; and TTC experienced a 2.6% increase in revenues for the day (perhaps because there were a lot more people to bring back after they moved free on one leg of a trip).

AS OF MID-JULY, no word at all is heard on Canadian National's defunct-for-the-third-time Montreal-Toronto TurboTrains.

EDITOR-AT-LARGE Paul Rayton is currently at large in Canada again, and he reports that he can verify reports published here earlier of the gradual downgrading of Canadian Pacific's dining car service.

AN INVESTIGATION INTO causes of the Amtrak Turbo crash described above will be forwarded to the Canadian Transport Commission. Questions were raised early about the train's brakes, which have shown previous problems, but there is no evidence yet to implicate them.

THE CASE FOR THE FLORIDIAN

On July 2 Amtrak posted notices that the Chicago-Florida FLORIDIAN was to be discontinued August 2, following Dept. of Transportation plans to prune back the Amtrak system to an even smaller skeleton. In late July the Interstate Commerce Commission ordered Amtrak to keep the train running for at least 4 additional months while hearings are held concerning the need for the service.

The reason, of course, for the ICC move was the formal complaint of several groups opposed to the train's demise. The National Association of Railroad Passengers on July 16 petitioned the ICC to call the hearings on this and on two other trains Amtrak proposed to drop, the NATIONAL LIMITED and the Richmond-Newport News, VA trains 98 & 99. In his letter to the ICC, Anthony Haswell, Chairman of NARP, asked that Amtrak be required to supply all schedule changes since May 1, 1971; daily on-time performance records since that date; and all documents filed in the pending arbitration case between Amtrak and the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. Amtrak is suing L&N for poor performance in operating the FLORIDIAN, even while it is moving to drop the train.

In Nashville, Tennessee, one of the cities presently served by the FLORIDIAN, the Committee on Passenger Service, chaired by William B. Strong, meanwhile was sending a report on the situation to Senator Howard Baker (who is presently in the limelight as the Vice-Chairman of the Senate committee investigating the Watergate incident.)

The COPS report made known quite a few important points regarding the problems that have long surrounded this train. According to the report, the FLORIDIAN was dubbed Amtrak's "worst train" by the Chicago Tribune Aug. 2, 1972, and was further described by Amtrak's James Bryant as the "worst" in equipment and performance. Bryant was also quoted as saying, "We know and freely admit that things are in bad, very bad shape." The Tribune's John Moreau summarized by saying, "The situation is not likely to change soon, and for now Amtrak would just as soon by rid of the run." Now, almost a year later, says the report, the train has not been improved, and Amtrak wants to drop it. The report contends that Amtrak has not tried to make a success of this train. In fact, by ignoring it, Amtrak has insured its failure. The report goes into graphic details, which we will quote below.

RUNNING TIME. Today's Amtrak timetable shows the current schedule from Chicago to Miami to be 39 hours, 25 minutes. The FLORIDIAN's steam-powered predecessor, the SOUTHWIND, traversed the same route in 30 hours, 25 minutes. More graphically, the 1948 SOUTHWIND made the 309-mile run from Chicago to Louisville in 4 hours, 45 minutes. Amtrak's FLORIDIAN takes almost twice as long (8 hours, 30 minutes).

TRACKAGE. The primary reason for the slow schedule is poor trackage. The worst track on the FLORIDIAN's run is the section from Chicago to Louisville, which is owned by the bankrupt Penn Central Railroad. The track is in such poor condition, caused by years of deferred maintenance, that speed limits of 10 and 20mph are not uncommon. In fact, the average speed between Chicago and Louisville is 36mph. Even at this slow speed, the track is so rough that it is often not possible to sleep in the overnight run. (Paul Rayton described the ride in RTN, July 3, 1972: "...the FLORIDIAN was rocking crazily, like a rowboat bobbing in heavy seas... I had never before spent a night in a train when I was literally afraid for my life. I could visualize, lying there in the darkness of the bedroom, a sudden strange feeling as we careened off a bridge into a river. Trapped in a bedroom, underwater! And once we started bouncing so severely that--besides being lifted bodily off the bed--

I was absolutely convinced that the car would bounce off the tracks. It was a hell of a ride."

TIMEKEEPING. In spite of the ridiculously slow schedule, Amtrak's timekeeping has been miserable. In the first 3 months of 1973, the FLORIDIAN (2 trains each day; 180 trains) was on time in Nashville only 4 times. The average lateness was over 2 hours.

ADVERTISING. Advertising for the FLORIDIAN (in Nashville) has been minimal. The only advertising to date has consisted of occasional 1/8-page newspaper ads and a handful of radio spots in the summer of 1972. Based on this lack of serious advertising, our opinion is that the vast majority of Nashvillians are not even aware that rail passenger service is available in Nashville.

TERMINAL. The beautiful, 73-year-old Union Station offers an attractive, but deserted exterior and is conveniently located in the center of town. The interior of the station, however, is deplorable. The roof leaks in many places, leaving puddles of water standing on the floor. The main lobby is roped off. Amtrak (the building's only tenant) is using what was the ladies' lounge as the present ticket office and waiting room. The deserted, dismal terminal does not encourage patronage. In fact, the building, which fronts on the busiest street in town, appears to be completely closed.

SCHEDULES. Six schedule changes have been imposed in two years. This frequent, drastic schedule changing has eliminated the possibility of regular patronage building up on a given schedule.

PROMOTION. Other than the minimal advertising mentioned above, Amtrak has done nothing to encourage ridership on the FLORIDIAN. While Amtrak has done a splendid job on many of its routes by promoting package tours to points of interest along the route, the only sort of promotional program for the FLORIDIAN is the "Free Wheels" program. Altho this is an imaginative offer, providing a free rental car in Florida for parties purchasing three adult tickets, it is only applicable for those boarding as far north as Chicago, the end point of the route.

STEWARDESS AND PASSENGER REPRESENTATIVES. Amtrak has a sizeable staff of stewardesses and passenger representatives riding its trains to answer questions and help the passengers. To the best of our knowledge, very few of these people, if any, have operated on the FLORIDIAN.

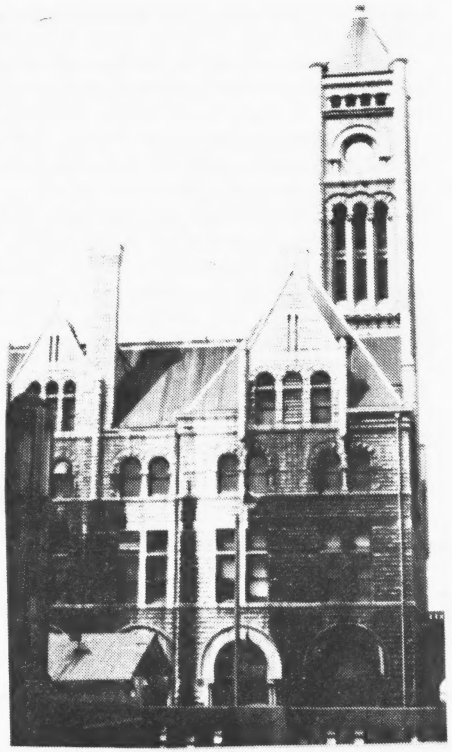
EQUIPMENT. The FLORIDIAN has received consistently some of the worst equipment in the system, including coaches and sleepers with inoperative air conditioning, diners without electrical power, and engines that break down completely in route. The above problems, along with dirty interiors and exteriors of cars, are commonplace.

PERSONNEL. No crew members on this train are employees of Amtrak. They are on the payroll of the railroads they were working for before the inception of Amtrak. Amtrak pays the respective railroad, which in turn pays the employees. Thus, Amtrak has no direct control of the train crews, and service suffers greatly. The L&N Railroad presently staffs the Nashville terminal and the operating crew (engineers, conductors, and brakemen) between Louisville and Montgomery. To the best of our knowledge, these L&N personnel have offered service of the highest caliber. The on-train crew (porters and dining car staff) alternates between Penn Central and Seaboard Coast Line employees. The SCL crews seem to offer adequate service, but could stand improvement. The Penn Central crews, in our opinion, are for the most part surly, uncooperative, and rude to the passengers. They appear to be completely unsupervised. Only direct, hard-nosed control by Amtrak can eliminate the horror stories caused by rude personnel on the FLORIDIAN. (Note: This problem is system-wide; however, it appears to be acute on the FLORIDIAN due to the Penn Central crews.

SUMMARY: In spite of the above problems, patronage on the train is increasing. The average passenger load on the Montgomery to Louisville segment was 72 in February 1973 and 89 in March 1973. In June the average was over 125 passengers per day--a 100% increase over 1972. On some days over 200 passengers have been aboard.

On a train with only an approximate 140-seat capacity (2 coaches and 2 sleepers), 200 passengers crammed into frequently hot and malfunctioning equipment appears to be more of a throwback to the horrors of World War II rail travel than an example of what modern-day rail service should be. On numerous occasions in June, passengers with tickets have not been allowed to board the train in Chicago, Indianapolis, Louisville, Nashville and Birmingham because there was physically no space on the train--not even standing room.

In this day and time, it is inexcusable for a rail transportation system to be run so poorly that individuals who may have spent months planning a vacation and who have in fact held tickets for a train for as long as a month are left standing at the station. Those coach passengers who are "lucky" enough to be allowed to board the train are being seated in the diner, in the rest room, in the sleepers, and in the dome on a regular basis. And to date, Amtrak has refused to yield to the requests of the on-line ticket offices to run any extra equipment to handle the overflow passenger loads.



The handsome Nashville Union Station was photographed in this side view by RTN's Doug Ellis.

Thus the public is demonstrating its desire to use the FLORIDIAN. To even talk about discontinuing this train at the height of its popularity (under Amtrak) makes no sense at all.

FINANCIAL DATA ON THE FLORIDIAN - JAN, FEB, MAR 1973

Total revenue: $1,341,698

Costs - Train operation	$ 2,135,874	88%
- Avoidable costs	123,530	5%
- Facilities	115,148	5%
- Gen'l & Administrative	59,660	2%
Total Costs:	$ 2,434,212	100%

Revenue = 55% of total costs

Comparison data for trains not proposed for discontinuance:

Trains 40, 41, 540, 541	Revenue = 56% of total costs
Trains 5, 6, 55, 56	61% of total costs
Trains 7, 8	53% of total costs
Trains 50, 51	22% of total costs

On the basis of percentage of total costs generated in revenue, a number of other trains in the Amtrak system have equal or poorer records than the FLORIDIAN, but Amtrak is not moving to discontinue them. A logical reason for "writing off" this train has not yet made itself known to RTN.

mixed train of thoughts

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION was asked by the Senate Commerce Committee July 25 to map out a new railroad system to serve the Northeastern and Midwestern areas affected by the present railroad bankruptcies, mainly of the Penn Central. A new Rail Emergency Planning Office would be created in the ICC to do this, under the urging of Sen. Vance Hartke, but the Administration doesn't like the idea, saying the study would take too long..... AMTRAK AUTO TRAINS may run on the West Coast yet. Gov. Reagan of California signed a bill this month which allows mixing passenger and freight cars in the state on a trial basis until Jan. 1, 1976. Previous proposed Amtrak auto-carrying service ran into a snag when a state law prohibiting it was discovered..... TOWN OF TRUCKEE, California is getting ready to welcome the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR's riders when the train makes that a stop beginning probably in September. Local residents worked half a year on the project. That train, along with the COAST STARLIGHT, will most likely continue to run daily at least until October 28, since Amtrak people simply are too busy trying to handle summer traffic and problems to make up new schedules for September..... A MAJOR SOURCE of important passenger train news and interviews is U.S. News & World Report magazine, which earlier published the important interviews with Ben Biaggini and Roger Lewis. Now Secretary of Transportation Claude Brinegar talks in the July 23 issue, mainly about urban traffic problems but also on saving the Northeastern railroads (see QUOTES, p. 7)..... BAD PRESS CONTINUES to plague Amtrak, as equipment problems continue to plague summer riders. Ridgely Hunt, an Associate Editor of the Chicago Tribune, wrote (July 8) a "Survivor's report" on his Amtrak trip. He was really sore. Quoth he: "If you're planning a vacation trip on an Amtrak train, forget it. You'd get a better ride in a paddy wagon--and more courteous service, too." He concludes: "The airlines would do it better. Indeed, almost anyone would. Almost any minor executive from the Andy Frain organization could tell them how to line up their paying customers. The Greyhound Bus people could explain about tickets. A grade school teacher could show them how the little hand points to the hours and the big hand points to the minutes. In their own defense, Amtrak would undoubtedly observe that this is the vacation season when they have exceptionally large numbers of passengers. Indeed they do, and herein lies the poignant part of the story. Here are hundreds and thousands of respectable people with their money in their hands, striving against all reason to return to the trains. They probably won't try again"..... THAT RIDERSHIP CHART printed in our last issue points up an interesting fact. On almost every route where fares were cut 20-25%, ridership shot up far in excess of that, resulting in more revenue for Amtrak. Conversely, Amtrak raised fares on some Western routes. What happened? Ridership went up anyway, revenues going up out of proportion to the ridership gains. Amtrak wins again.....

* * *

A RETRACTION ON a report made in last issue: Amtrak was taking reservations on the N.Y.-L.A. thru car carried on the NATIONAL LTD after August 2 even tho it was up for discontinuance after that date..... LOOK FOR AMTRAK to use more rail diesel cars on a number of "corridor" runs, perhaps with modular food service units. One may be the eventual Oakland-Bakersfield run with train connections at Martinez. There reportedly are 13 others being considered, including Salt Lake-Pocatello-Boise, Washington-Cumberland, Kansas City-Omaha, Denver-Pueblo, and several Eastern corridors. This approach would get around Amtrak's very pressing equipment shortage..... THREE NEW INTERCITY Amtrak routes are expected this fall in Illinois, with partial state subsidies: Chicago-Bloomington-Springfield; Chicago-Kankakee-Champaign-Decatur; and Chicago-Rockford-East Dubuque. The state is also continuing subsidies for the Chicago-Quincy, Chicago-Peoria, and Chicago-Rock Island routes..... MEXICAN TRAIN CRASH near Mexicali injured 85 persons July 14, the worst crash in Baja California history..... MEXICAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS has a bad locomotive shortage, so connections with Amtrak at Laredo are being hurt. Dallas spokesmen report the AZTEC EAGLE forced to run with two GP units to pull 25 cars.....

AFTER THE "EXPERIMENT," WHAT?

by Glenn Lee

Once the Amtrak "experimental stage" has proven trains can be effective in "so many different ways" for users and nonusers alike, a comprehensive nationwide passenger train plan should be developed, and implementation programmed. This would include several kinds of services, such as:

(1) Inter-regional trains of national importance. This would include most of the long-distance trains now in operation, including longer-range day-trains such as the COAST STARLIGHT, and overnight runs like the PANAMA LTD and the DENVER Z.

(2) Inter-regional trains of regional importance. To include long-distance routes of lesser importance, and thus subject to delay in implementation; runs such as: Memphis-Washington "TENNESSEAN" route of the Southern; Minneapolis-Omaha-Kansas City-New Orleans via the old CNW NORTH AMERICAN route and the KCS SOUTHERN BELLE; and second trains on major transcontinental routes, such as MAINSTREETER on old NP line, WESTERN STAR on old GN line, ARGONAUT on SP's Sunset Route and GRAND CANYON on the Santa Fe route.

(3) Regional trains runs mainly to support residents of the region thru which the train passes and not needed to support nation-wide circulation. These would include D&RGW Denver-Craig YAMPA VALLEY MAIL, D&RGW ROYAL GORGE run; Seattle-Spokane CASCADIAN runs; many of the former "400," HIAWATHA and ZEPHYR runs from Chicago; and many former runs within New England and the South. Perhaps the greatest future "environmental" need for trains will be in this category and in no. (4) below.

(4) Intra-area "market" and "corridor" trains. This would clude runs such as Sacramento-San Francisco/San Jose as an example of corridor service; and Monterey-San Francisco as an example of a market train (in to the big city in the morning for business and shopping; home to the little city in the evening). Many of these trains could be run, or at least partially sponsored by regional governments, regional agencies, or by divisions of state agencies (such as an agency developed from existing highway departments to look after inter-city affairs, a la GO Transit in Ontario).

(5) Specialty runs. These would be operated for some specific special purpose including tourism and entertainment, or to help eliminate isolation of a particular geographic area. Such runs would include former passenger service runs (with thru sleeping cars) on Santa Fe to Grand Canyon station and lodge; to Yellowstone Park via both UP and NP (BN) specials; the REDWOOD thru the Eel River Canyon in Northwestern California. Restoration of passenger train service from San Diego to the east via the Carriso Gorge on the SD&AE/T&T (SP-held) lines might qualify under this section.

Development of such a passenger plan would no doubt be paralleled by the same type of intramural political struggles that proceeded with expansion of the interstate highway program in the 1950s. Such struggles over a period of years will produce inequities in development of a true nationwide passenger train system, but such inequities have existed since man first began exercising the use of government.

No law of any kind can eliminate "pork-barreling" which has produced not only Parkersburg trains, but wild developments of all kinds from massive dams to highways-thru-nowhere for districts of various senior elected officials. It is an unavoidable appendix of a democratic society. However, development of a good "game plan" will probably be the best way to start developing a comprehensive nationwide passenger train system in the next fifteen years.

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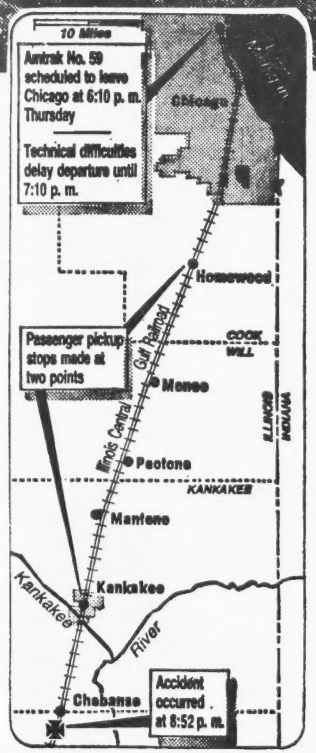
"PREDICTED" DERAILMENT OF AMTRAK'S PANAMA LIMITED

Two issues ago Editor-at-Large Paul Rayton wrote in these pages, "under the circumstances, one gets the feeling that Amtrak and/or ICG are playing fast and loose with the lives of the patrons of the PANAMA. I would feel safe in predicting another major derailment on this route." Those words were unfortunately prophetic. The night of July 12 the PANAMA LIMITED, southbound from Chicago to New Orleans, derailed near Chebanse, Illinois, giving minor injuries to 85 of the 276 passengers on the train.



A workman starts the job of lifting the 10 derailed cars back onto the track. Map at left gives the scenario of the event. Photo & map courtesy of Chicago Tribune.

The cause of the wreck this time, however, appeared not to be due to Illinois Central Gulf's bad track, but to a problem with one of the Amtrak passengers cars. An ICG spokesman reported that part of the undercarriage of the fourth car of the train fell loose onto the tracks, hitting a switch and opening it, causing the 9 cars behind the baggage car to be diverted off the main track. The force of the wrenching pulled wheels off other cars, with estimated damage of about $80,000. The rear car was dragged at 55mph, hanging down a 20-foot embankment, but was pulled back upright by the time the train ground to a halt. All cars tilted over except the 3 engines and the baggage. Three hundred yards of rails and ties were damaged.

A further report on the cause of the derailment implicated the switch, but did not indicate for certain whether the switch had been knocked open by the car's undercarriage. A 55-mph limit was in effect due to repair work north of the scene; the usual speed is 70-80mph.

(continued from page 5)

under these emergency conditions I suggested that sandwiches could be served in the lounge. Tempers flared and the steward decided to serve lunch. Both doors to the entrance of the diner were open and the supply door in the hall was left open, obstructing the passage way in an effort to reduce the heat. At about 1:45pm, while in the diner, we were sidetracked to let the fast freight Blue Streak Merchandise highball thru on the main line. Naturally, tempers flared between crew and passengers and I was concerned for the discomfort of the dining car crew. However, everybody was hungry and could not wait until the evening meal, not knowing if the air conditioning unit would be fixed or not.

Two attempts, one at Tucson and one at Phoenix, were made to fix the air conditioning, but the crew was advised that it would have to wait until a spare part was obtained. I think that in El Paso an electrician checked this unit and the only thing wrong was that somebody in Los Angeles failed to push a button and shortly thereafter the car cooled off. Many of these incidents could be avoided if an Amtrak representative, with authority similar to that of a conductor, were on board each long-haul train. I will not take any more time on the SUNSET, but my trip was similar to the story by Paul Rayton (RTN, Second June issue)...

June 21 I departed Detroit at 8:30am on train #361 destined to Chicago. As I recall, in Detroit there were no red caps and no baggage carts due to the stair access to the trains. The Detroit station is of no benefit to Amtrak nor in any way encourages train travel. By this time I was so disgusted with my trip that I avoided any "Amtrak" conversations. However, several passengers related their experiences when they arrived in Detroit from Chicago on recent trips. They stated that when the train arrives at night the station is closed, that no taxis are available as they refuse to go into this area due to the high crime rate in Detroit, that they would never travel by train to Detroit under these conditions. It is imperative that Amtrak take immediate steps to meet the 11:05 train with buses and porters, regardless of the expense, in order to foster goodwill among Amtrak passengers. These buses would then take the passengers to the center of Detroit where they could get taxis.

In my honest opinion, tri-weekly trains are of little value to Amtrak and discourage passenger travel. When a person's vacation starts on Saturday, he expects to leave on Saturday and not when Amtrak tells him to leave. If Sears Roebuck opened its doors Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I am sure most of the customers would go to Montgomery Ward... If a man and his wife and three children decided to take a vacation, living in the Los Angeles area and destined to Houston, he would select Monday thru Thursday for the family plan discount. He reads Amtrak's advertisements about family discounts, yet he can travel only on one day of the week, as the SUNSET departs on Sunday, Tuesday and Friday and the family fare is no good on Sunday & Friday. Either run the SUNSET daily or make the family plan valid any day of the week.

Richard L. Wilhelm

San Diego, California

My wife and I have just made a trip from New Orleans to Washington DC on Southern Railway's SOUTHERN CRESCENT. It left with 3 diesel units, baggage-coach, full length diner, coaches, sleepers and one dome car--total 12 revenue cars mostly filled leaving New Orleans.

I went thru the coaches and found them clean. The diner was very clean and the food excellent. Sleeping cars were clean and full. Our bedroom was clean and comfortable. The dome car was in good condition, but removed at Atlanta. We left Atlanta with 18 revenue cars. Southern certainly needs daily service New York to New Orleans. I was told that the summer demand for passage is very high.

E. N. Edwards

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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We have now completed the tedious changeover to our new address label system. You can now read the history of your subscription on your address label. For example, the following codes on the right end of a label: P4 15-38 R62 B64 R88 "P4" is a locational code for our files; "15-38" indicates the initial subscription began with whole number 15 and ran through number 38; then the subscriber renewed for 24 issues, bringing the last number of that renewal up to #62, as indicated by R62; some back issues were ordered and two were out of stock, so two extra issues were credited to the subscription, as indicated by "B64"; then another renewal for 24 issues, indicated by "R88", makes the final number of the current subscription the whole number 88. The whole number of any given issue of RTN is always given near the bottom of page 2. The whole number of this issue is 64.

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If you detect any clerical error that has arisen in the changeover to the new system, we'd appreciate your letting us know so that we may correct it promptly.

THROUGH TIME FRAME 71573

Tonight the STARLIGHT was jammed, seventeen cars brimming over with people as the big silver vehicle moved slowly along Embarcadero Avenue, tooting into the 16th & Wood station--people in the dining car eating, sitting in coach seats gazing out at the graying sky, watching movies in the lounge, standing at vestibule doors surveying Jack London Square, walking up and down aisles, hidden in bedrooms and roomettes. An impressive sight of a place on wheels moving through the gray of the evening, seeming to bring some of the Southern California sun and restlessness along with it, encapsulated in those striped chambers of fascination.

Later we lie and listen to the urgent zephyrs moving over the Golden Gate Bridge, pushing across the water, whipping over the SP right-of-way, across the Santa Fe tracks, climbing the Berkeley hills, rustling the trees on Grizzly Peak. The slow trombone of a Santa Fe freight crosses the city. The more urgent trumpet of a fast SP train momentarily joins it. The winds shake the leaves and the trees groan and rub against the roof. The gray fog streams across the sky and the winds blow as they have done ever since that momentous occasion only hinted at in Indian lore when the Pacific finally tore through the hills and made a bay. And the horns of the trains blow as they always will.

--J.R.